

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-21. (Canceled)

22. (Currently Amended) A playing card reader, comprising:

a housing having a receptacle sized to receive a plurality of playing cards;

a transmitter received in the housing;

a receiver received in the housing;

at least a first antenna electrically coupled to at least one of the transmitter and the receiver, the first antenna positioned to electro-magnetically interrogate at least some of the playing cards; and

a computer-readable medium storing a mapping that uniquely identifies playing cards based on a random distribution of conductive material carried by each of the playing cards, wherein at least one of a number of aspects of the conductive material carried by each playing card corresponds to a respective rank or suit of the respective playing card, the number of aspects of the conductive material including the number and size of the conductive material.

23. (Original) The reader of claim 22 wherein the first antenna is positioned to electro-magnetically interrogate the playing cards one at a time, as each of the playing cards is removed from the housing.

24. (Original) The reader of claim 22 wherein at least a portion of the housing comprises a radio frequency barrier positioned between the receptacle and an exit of the housing, and the first antenna is positioned with respect to the radio frequency barrier and the exit to

electro-magnetically interrogate the playing cards one at a time, as each of the playing cards is removed from the housing.

25. (Original) The reader of claim 22 wherein the first antenna is positioned to electro-magnetically interrogate a number of the playing cards in the receptacle simultaneously.

26. (Original) The reader of claim 22 wherein the first antenna is positioned to electro-magnetically interrogate the playing cards one at a time, as each of the playing cards is in the receptacle.

27. (Canceled)

28. (Original) The reader of claim 22 wherein the transmitter and the receiver take the form of a transceiver.

29. (Currently Amended) A system for wirelessly monitoring wagering and play of a playing card game at a gaming table using playing cards and wagering chips each bearing conductive material, the system comprising:

a card reader having a wireless transmitter and receiver coupled to at least a first antenna to electro-magnetically interrogate playing cards;

a chip reader having at least one wireless transmitter and receiver coupled to a plurality of antennas positioned proximate to respective wagering placement areas to electro-magnetically interrogate wagering chips placed at the wager placement areas, if any; and

a computing system coupled to receive data from both the wireless card reader and the wireless chip reader, the computer system including a computer-readable medium storing a mapping that uniquely identifies playing cards based on a random distribution of conductive material carried by each of the playing cards, wherein at least one of a number of aspects of the conductive material carried by each playing card corresponds to a respective rank or suit of the

respective playing card, the number of aspects of the conductive material including the number and size of the conductive material.

30. (Original) The system of claim 29, further comprising:

a card shoe having a receptacle sized and dimensioned for holding a plurality of playing cards, wherein the card reader is housed in the card shoe.

31. (Original) The system of claim 29, further comprising:

a chip tray; and

a chip tray reader having at least one wireless transmitter and receiver coupled to at a plurality of antennas positioned in the chip tray to electro-magnetically interrogate wagering chips placed at the chip tray, if any, the chip tray reader coupled to the computing system to provide data thereto.

32. (Original) The system of claim 29, further comprising:

a dealer's hand reader having at least one wireless transmitter and receiver coupled to at a plurality of antennas positioned to electro-magnetically interrogate at least one playing card forming a dealer's initial hand when positioned proximate thereto, the dealer's hand reader coupled to the computing system to provide data thereto.

33. (Withdrawn) A method of automating a card game, comprising:

wirelessly interrogating each of a plurality of playing cards using radio frequency transmissions; and

for at least some of the playing cards, determining a rank of the playing card based on the wireless interrogation using a mapping stored on a computer-readable medium that uniquely identifies playing cards based on a random distribution of conductive material carried by each of the playing cards.

34. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 33 wherein wirelessly interrogating each of a plurality of playing cards includes transmitting radio frequency energy toward the playing cards, and receiving a radio frequency signal in return from at least some of the playing cards.

35. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 33 wherein wirelessly interrogating each of a plurality of playing cards includes transmitting radio frequency energy toward the playing cards and receiving a radio frequency signal in return from at least some of the playing cards, while the playing cards are in a card shoe.

36. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 33 wherein wirelessly interrogating each of a plurality of playing cards includes transmitting radio frequency energy toward the playing cards and receiving a radio frequency signal in return from at least some of the playing cards while the playing cards are being withdrawn from a card shoe.

37. (Canceled)

38. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 33 wherein determining a rank of the playing card based on the wireless interrogation includes determining decoding a return radio frequency signal returned from at least one of the playing cards in response to the wireless interrogation.

39. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 33, further comprising:
wirelessly interrogating each of a plurality of wagering chips using radio frequency transmissions.

40. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 33, further comprising:
wirelessly interrogating each of a plurality of wagering chips using radio frequency transmissions;

determining a value of each of a number of wagers based on the wireless interrogation of the wagering chips; and

determining an outcome of at least one wager based on the determined rank of the playing cards and the determined value of the wagers.

41-49. (Canceled)

50. (Withdrawn) A method of identifying playing cards, comprising:

for each playing card,

transmitting at least a first radio frequency interrogation signal;

receiving a radio frequency response from the playing card; and

determining a value of the playing card based on the received radio frequency response using a mapping stored on a computer-readable medium that uniquely identifies playing cards based on a random distribution of conductive material carried by each of the playing cards.

51. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 50 wherein determining a value of the playing card based on the received radio frequency response includes determining a position on the playing card from which the response emanates.

52. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 50 wherein determining a value of the playing card based on the received radio frequency response includes determining whether the response is received at a first antenna or a second antenna, spaced across and radio frequency barrier from the first antenna.